



YERINGTON MINE

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • OCTOBER 2004

Yerington, Nevada

UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AT YERINGTON MINE SITE

This fact sheet, prepared by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), is being sent to the Yerington community and other interested parties to update you on what has occurred at the Yerington Mine site since our last public meeting on August 25, 2004. We will discuss continuing activities as well as those we are working toward for the near future. The agencies hope to make this fact sheet the first of regular written updates to better inform the community regarding ongoing investigations and activities at the site. Fact sheets such as this are meant to supplement, not take the place of, public meetings. The agencies welcome suggestions on how to improve our communication with the public. To provide comments or suggestions, please see the list of contacts at the end of this fact sheet. The agencies thank the EPA for printing and distributing this document.

Sampling by BLM

BLM gave a report at the last public meeting on sampling conducted on the mine site to make sure their Health & Safety Plan for workers would be adequate to protect them from potential hazards. This sampling effort showed levels of radiation in soil in parts of the Process Area (see site map) that could be of risk to workers on the site.

Since that time, BLM has conducted additional sampling both inside and outside the Process Area, including the evaporation and sulfide tailings ponds. The results are similar to what they found previously—radiological hazards that warrant protection for workers in certain areas of the site. Results also indicate a need for further investigation to more fully characterize, or assess, the site for these hazards and better determine the levels and types of radiation on the site. Additionally, the results reinforce the need to monitor the air on and around the site as well as conduct an aerial radiological survey to determine where radiation may be both on and offsite.

Action Plan

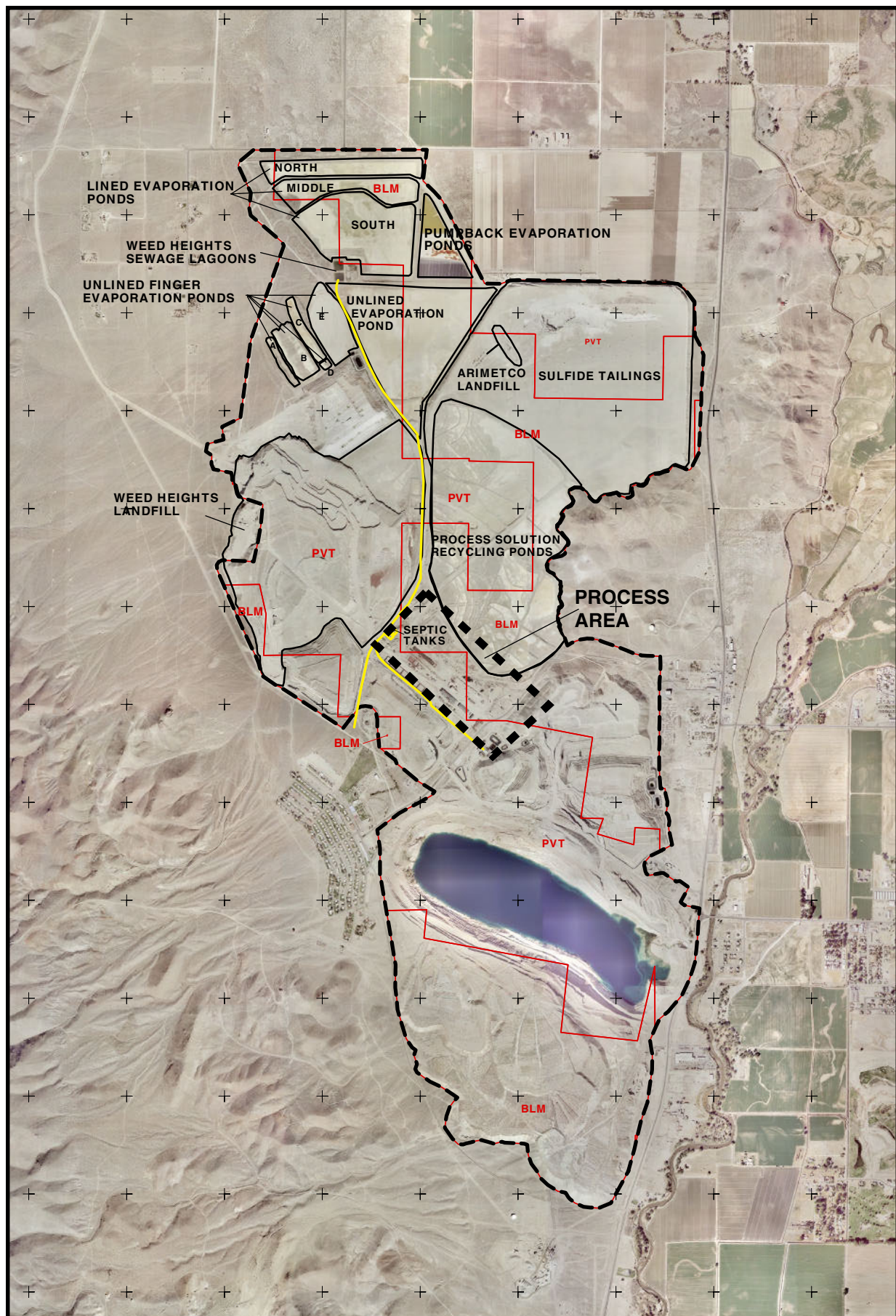
Several actions for moving forward with specific site activities and public notification were discussed by NDEP at the August 25 public meeting. Below are the activities we are currently concentrating on and where we are in implementation:

- Air Monitoring: The agencies are working with the Atlantic Richfield Co. (ARC) to determine the specific areas where air-monitoring stations should be located, both on and offsite. EPA has provided details of interim work plans for this purpose, and ARC is currently assessing these work plans. A site walkthrough is scheduled for mid-October to determine the locations for air-monitoring stations. One unresolved issue is whether temporary or permanent air monitoring stations should be installed. Temporary stations can be put into place quickly, while permanent stations would take several months longer. ARC will send details of the air-monitoring work plan to NDEP, BLM and EPA for review and approval.
- Aerial Survey for Radiation: The agencies are working toward developing a plan for an aerial radiological survey. Areas that would be surveyed for radiation by a low-flying helicopter would include much of Mason Valley. The community will be notified before such activities take place.
- Site Security: Because of potential hazards on the mine site, improved security is needed to keep unauthorized people out of the area. Plans for a near-term solution, including patrols during the day, seven days a week and fencing in specific areas, should be finalized soon.
- Dust Mitigation: Keeping potentially hazardous dust from blowing around and off the site is a priority. The agencies' long-term goal is to investigate the locations with elevated concentrations and then determine the best technical method for cleanup. As part of the mid-October site walkthrough, we will be assessing priority locations for these actions.
- Process Area Sampling: ARC is currently sampling both soil and groundwater in the Process Area. Results of this sampling will help guide the agencies in some of the above activities.
- Domestic Well Sampling: ARC continues to monitor private wells on a quarterly basis. A proposal has been made to install monitoring wells between the mine and Sunset Hills to better determine if contaminants from the mine are moving north in the groundwater. Following the mid-October site walkthrough activities, recommendations for monitoring well locations will be discussed at the Yerington Technical Work Group meeting. It is important to determine whether uranium in the groundwater is naturally occurring or from activities at the mine site.

Update on Oversight Status for Yerington Mine Site

There have been no changes to date on the oversight status for the site. However, the City of Yerington, the Yerington Paiute Tribe and Lyon County are in favor of EPA taking the lead on enforcement and project management. Governor Guinn and the three agencies will take this request under consideration.

The recent announcement by BLM regarding the transfer of project management responsibility from the Carson City Field Office to the Nevada State Office indicates BLM's understanding of the complexities of this project. EPA, BLM and NDEP are still sharing roles according to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). If there is any change in this arrangement, we will advise the community.



Yerington Mine Site

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For More Information

Please feel free to contact any of the agency personnel below if you have questions or concerns regarding the Yerington Mine site:

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